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SUMMARIES OF ARTICLES

The Structure and Function of the System achieving Food Safety and Social Trust — Current situation and issues of establishing the Good Agricultural Practice —

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[abstract]

A contemporary policy target of food administration in Japan is to recover firmly the social trust for food that was lost once during the BSE crisis and illegal labeling syndrome. The ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries of Japan is attempting to develop coherent traceability network in order to rebuild the labeling system. It would be fundamentally difficult to encourage the voluntary commitment of maintaining properly the trust that has public good attribute among the market stakeholders. Any social mechanism to deter free-rider problem should be prerequisite.

In addition, the advance of modern food system is likely to raise an information incompleteness problem due to the longer distance 'from farm to table'. It is more difficult to determine specifically a point of hazard contamination. One apparatus is the conformity assessment system that has been developing toward further globalization since the WTO/TBT agreement. Traceability and auditing are important elements in the assessment system.

A steady growth of LPLC (Local production and local consumption) business and a rapid spread of traceability are altering the distribution structure of agricultural products in Japan. Such deals based on the face-to-face principle might have regressive influence against large scale distribution that has been developing nationally during the post-war period.

Several trials are independently ongoing to introduce such a quality management system as ISO9001 together with assessment of conformity for agricultural products. GAP (Good Agricultural Practice) is one of measures that put the system into practice. A good practice with certification system containing of documentation, record, monitoring, and auditing would provide an adequate incentive to keeping honest business.

An actual problem is a business design how to apply the practice to small local farmers. A group application is more suitable to operate the practice by assemblers like agricultural cooperatives rather than individual farmers.

The Development and Issue of Food Safety and its Assurance on Agricultural Producing Area and Farm Level

Yasushi SEMBOKUYA (Obihiro University of Agriculture and Veterinary Medicine)

The purpose of this paper is to argue the current approaches and its issues of confirming the food safety and its assurance on the agricultural producing area and farm level.

It is hard to introduce the production record for farmers without any incentives or enforcement by law on farm level. However, the improvement of livestock management could be an effective matter to introduce it. Based on the analysis of dairy milk recording data, the number of somatic cell of the groups that has high producing dairy cows, is lower than that of low producing dairy cows. Reducing the number of the somatic cell is the result of increasing the milk yield. The milk pricing system of Hokuren Agricultural Cooperative makes milk farmers reduce the number of somatic cell in their milk.

Adequate incentive system has been needed to introduce the food safety assurance system on agricultural producing areas and farm level.

Scale Expansion and Cash Flow Operation in Dairy Farm Management

Naofumi HATAKEYAMA (MeijiFeed Co., Ltd. Dairy Support Center)

This article will discuss the aspects of financial operation via cash-flow analysis in large-scale dairy farm management that strategically aims to expand its operation further.

The conclusions are as follows.

First, when trying to analyze management in the process of dynamic expansion, there was a significant difference in evaluating between the management analysis method with its emphasis on profitability, versus one with an emphasis on cash flow and stability. It becomes important to diagnose financial stability based on cash flow when evaluating large amounts of investment and dairy farm management in the process of further expansion.

Second, the investment timing and priority were deeply related to the increase and decrease in cash amount. In dairy farm management, the production process goes through multiple stages such as feeding, raising and milking, thus decision-making concerning where to place investment priority among various sectors becomes highly critical. Especially for the type of large-scale, extensive land use dairy farming seen in Hokkaido, investment priority should be placed on milking (including the purchase of new cattle) rather than upgrading the feeding stage in order to stabilize financial operation.